

Message Text

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STADIS//////////

FOR NEA ONLY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EG LY US
SUBJECT: DIALOGUE WITH LIBYANS AND CIVIL AIRCRAFT

REF: STATE 149531

1. WOULD CLEARLY BE USEFUL IF QADHAFI COULD SOMEHOW BE PER-
SUADED STOP SUPPORTING GLOBAL TERRORISM AND OPPOSING ME PEACE
SETTLEMENT. AS SEEN FROM HERE, QUESTION IS WHETHER A SIG-
NIFICANT INITIATIVE ON OUR PART NOW WOULD DISSUADE HIM FROM
HIS NEGATIVE POLICIES OR WHETHER PRECONDITION OF BETTER
RELATIONS WITH USG SHOULD PRIOR LIBYAN CESSATION OF
POLICIES DIRECTED AGAINST USG INTERESTS IN MIDDLE EAST AND
ME PEACE. MATTER IS ONE OF PERSONAL JUDGMENT. I AM SKEP-
TICAL THAT ANY SIGNIFICANT USG INITIATIVE WOULD CHANGE
QADHAFI'S POLICIES. ON CONTRARY, I BELIEVE ANY EFFORT ON
OUR PART TO APPEAR TO BE WOOING HIM WITHOUT A PRIOR
ASSURANCE OF A POLICY CHANGE ON HIS PART WILL SIMPLY
ENCOURAGE HIM TO CONTINUE HIS PRESENT DISRUPTIVE POLICIES.

2. DEPT CORRECT IN THE ASSESSMENT THAT ANY SIGNIFICANT
USG INITIATIVE NOW, SUCH AS SENDING VERY HIGH LEVEL
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USG OFFICIAL TO LIBYA, RELEASING C-130S OR EVEN RE-
CEIVING THE LIBYAN AMBASSADOR, WOULD AROUSE STRONGLY
NEGATIVE REACTION IN EGYPT. IT WILL PERSONALLY OFFEND
SADAT. I SENSE NO CHANGE IN SADAT'S ATTITUDE TOWARD
QADHAFI. IN RECENT TALK I HAD WITH SADAT ABOUT REPORTED
OVERTURES BY VARIOUS PARTIES TO MEDIATE EGYPTIAN/LIBYAN
DISPUTE, HE ATTRIBUTED THESE TO QADHAFI AND SCATHINGLY

DISMISSED THEM AS TACTICAL PLOYS. SADAT FIRMLY BELIEVES THERE IS NO CHANGE IN QADHAFI'S BASIC PURPOSE, WHICH IS TO DISRUPT THE ME PEACE PROCESS BY EVERY MEANS POSSIBLE. HE ALSO POINTS TO LIBYAN SUPPORT FOR DISSENTS IN CHAD, SUDAN AND ELSEWHERE. HE STRESSES THAT QADHAFI CONTINUES TO SUPPORT GLOBAL TERRORIST EFFORTS, INCLUDING HARBORING CARLOS, AND CONTINUES TO ATTEMPT TO CONDUCT SUBSERVICE ACTIVITIES IN EGYPT. I HOLD LITTLE HOPE FOR PUTATIVE EGYPTIAN/LIBYAN TALKS IN LONDON EXCEPT PERHAPS SOME TEMPORARY EASING OF CURRENT BORDER FRICTIONS.

3. AS DEPT AWARE, SADAT AND FAHMY HAVE CONVINCED THEMSELVES THAT USG IS "SOFT" OR EVEN "AFRAID" OF QADHAFI. DESPITE OUR STRONG REBUTTALS, THEY BELIEVE THAT WE SECRETLY SEEK TO SUPPORT HIM. ANY POSITIVE ACTIONS ON OUR PART VIS-A-VIS QADHAFI, UNLESS ACCOMPANIED BY A DEMONSTRABLE SHIFT IN LIBYAN ATTITUDES, WILL BE INTERPRETED HERE AS SUPPORTING THEIR SUSPICIONS. SHOULD QADHAFI'S ANTI-EGYPTIAN ACTIVITIES CONTINUE WHILE WE ARE TAKING INITIATIVES TOWARD THE LATTER, EGYPTIAN LEADERSHIP WILL BE EVEN MORE CONCERNED. IT WILL CHARGE THAT WE ARE DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY ENCOURAGING QADHAFI IN THESE ACTIVITIES. GIVEN KNOWN EGYPTIAN/LIBYAN STRAINS, WE SHOULD ALSO RECKON WITH THE FACT THAT AN INITIATIVE ON OUR PART TOWARD QADHAFI NOW

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WOULD BE VIEWED BY ARAB WORLD IN GENERAL AND EGYPT IN PARTICULAR AS A LESSENING OF SUPPORT FOR SADAT IN THE OVERALL ARAB EQUATION. THIS COULD DO US MORE HARM THAN GOOD IN OUR BROADER EFFORTS URGE SADAT TO WORK ON HIS ARAB COLLEAGUES TO ADOPT MORE FLEXIBLE POSITIONS RE GENEVA CONFERENCE.

4. WITH RESPECT TO AIRCRAFT, RELEASE OF C-130S WOULD HAVE HIGHLY NEGATIVE IMPACT HERE. THEY HAVE BECOME A SYMBOL OF USG DISSATISFACTION WITH QADHAFI POLICIES. SO FAR AS ANY OTHER TYPE OF AIRCRAFT ARE CONCERNED, E.G., L-100S, IF IT CAN BE DEMONSTRATED THAT THESE CAN BE USED SOLELY FOR CIVILIAN PURPOSES, WE CAN DEFEND SUCH TRANSACTION. WE WOULD HAVE TO EMPHASIZE THAT THEY NEITHER SUPPORT QADHAFI'S NEFARIOUS ACTIVITIES NOR CONSTITUTE A DIRECT THREAT TO EGYPT. HOWEVER, IF EGYPTIANS SUBSEQUENTLY FIND THAT L-100S ARE TRANSPORTING MILITARY EQUIPMENT OR PERSONNEL TO EGYPTIAN BORDER AREAS, TO SUDANESE DISSIDENTS OR TO ETHIOPIA, EGYPTIAN RECRIMINATIONS AGAINST US WILL BE BITTER INDEED. SHOULD WE DECIDE TO AUTHORIZE L-100 SALE, EGYPTIANS WILL OF COURSE HAVE TO LIVE WITH IT. HOWEVER, WE SHOULD THEN

EXPECT THAT THEY WILL SHOW THEIR RESENTMENT IN MANY
WAYS. OUR COOPERATION WILL BE ADVERSELY AFFECTED.

5. WHATEVER WE DECIDE TO DO VIS-A-VIS LIBYA, IF ANY-
THING, WE WILL BE WELL ADVISED TO DISCUSS IT IN ADVANCE
WITH SADAT AND TO WEIGH HIS VIEWS. WE HAVE COMMITTED
OURSELVES TO DOING SO. FAILURE TO HONOR THAT COMMIT-
MENT WILL HURT OUR CREDIBILITY HERE.
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